

2018 HELENA OPEN LANDS WORK PLAN

PRINCIPAL GOAL OF THE HELENA OPEN LANDS MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (HOLMAC) WORK PLAN: To outline land management activities scheduled for implementation in the next 12 months. The work plan will be updated annually to address land management needs that have emerged as a result of input from the citizens of Helena, HOLMAC, and/or city staff. In accordance with the goals and objectives defined within the Helena Open Lands Management Plan, land stewardship activities shall be designed and implemented in a manner that will preserve, restore, and enhance the natural character of Helena's open lands and provide Helenans with accessible natural open lands.

TRAILS AND RECREATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

Purchased Trail Construction, Maintenance, and Coordination Services

Trail Construction – All new trail construction routes are subject to verbal approval by the City of Helena Parks Department liaison prior to the initiation of trail construction activities. Contractor shall identify trail construction routes with pin flags and/or ribbons situated within four feet of the intended construction route.

- Mount Ascension Trail (Easy Ride to Prickly Pear): construct a trail 24 inches wide of native material between the Easy Rider trail and Prickly Pear trail along a route designated by City staff with ribbons and pin flags. Woody vegetation located within 36 inches of the centerline (clearance limits) of the designated trail construction route will be severed at ground level and removed from the clearance limits of the trail route by City staff within 10 days of receiving a verbal request to complete said clearing work from Contractor.
- Bull Run Trail (Gold Rush Avenue to South California Street): construct a trail 36 inches wide of native material along a route designated by City staff with ribbons and pin flags.

Trail Improvement

- Entertainment: HOLMAC will designate a team of at least two members to be assigned the task of completing a field walk-through with the selected trail coordination contractor for the purpose of reviewing and approving the location and design of the scheduled trail improvement work prior to implementation. The field walk-through will be scheduled to occur early this spring at a date and time that is convenient for the assigned HOLMAC members.
 - A. *Alternate Section:* Widen Corridor and flatten tread, build up drainage features near bottom of alternate.

B. *Jeep Trail Section*: Install erosion controls (check dams and drainage features) on fall-line jeep trail section. Erosion and speed controls (grade reversals where possible, check-dams in entrenched areas) spot flattening sections and in-sloping turns, building up small berms for safety.

C. *Lower Section*: Realign/lengthen turns and build up berms.

- Mt. Ascension Loop Trail: Widen corridor and flatten tread.

Adopt-A-Trail Volunteer Program

- Proactively engage individuals and groups for participation.
- Produce an annual activity report for the Adopt-A-Trail program and deliver the completed report to the City of Helena

Mapping

- South Hills Trail map update: Provide GPS data to City including trail re-routes and/or new tails, improved trails, parking areas, etc.

Miscellaneous Tasks

- Coordinate volunteer activities (Workdays, Boy Scouts, Corporate and NGO's, Weed Pull events, etc.)

Safety - Safety is a prime concern, and the contractor shall conduct the contract work in a safe manner and shall comply with all laws, rules, and regulations relating to the safety of persons and property. The Contractor accepts responsibility to prevent accidents to its employees and supervised volunteers engaged upon or in vicinity of the project area. The Contractor shall be solely responsible for the protection and safety of its employees and supervised volunteers and for daily inspection of the work area and safety equipment. It is important that Contractors employees and supervised volunteers receive the proper safety training. The Montana Safety Culture Act (39-71-1501 to 39-71-1508 MCA) requires that employees and supervised volunteers receive appropriate employee safety orientation, job specific safety training and periodic refresher training. As a guideline, orientations should include the following items:

- Safety and operational instruction specific to the equipment they will be utilizing
- Where the supervised volunteer can find a copy of the Contractors safety policy
- The safety expectations of the Contractor
- The supervisory chain of command

- How to report accidents or unsafe conditions
- Emergency Plans and procedures that may apply

Volunteer Trail Construction Activities

Mount Ascension Directional Trail Construction Project

- Montana Bicycle Guild (MBG) proposes to construct a directional mountain bike trail on the southeast face of Mount Ascension between Eddy McClure West and Arrowroot Drive. This is an area identified as uniquely suited for this use as there are no current social trail crossings and uphill access from the bottom is limited to a single point (wooden bridge) to which warning signs can be affixed.

Mount Helena Rock Climbing Area

- Currently climbers are using existing game/social trails to access the base of the Mount Helena cliffs. The Helena Climber Coalition proposes to improve the current trails being utilized to access the climbing areas to make them more easily to identify and use. Additionally, as part of the planned trail work, the Helena Climbing Coalition proposes to improve flat rectangular pads at the base of the rock where established climbing routes occur. Concurrent with these efforts, the Helena Climbing Coalition will conduct a route development event that will require a temporary closure of the 1906 trail while rock-fall mitigation/cleaning work is underway.

Helena Parks Department

- Complete monthly inspections of entire trail system and associated wayfinding signage.
- Construct trail signs and install/replace as needed.
- Respond to trail issues throughout the year as needs arise.
- Continue to implement the social trail management recommendations provided by HOLMAC.

FACILITIES:

Trailheads

- Surface the entrance road and parking area at the Park City (Mount Helena Ridge) Trailhead, install parking barriers, and oversee the installation of a vaulted restroom facility.

- Expand the Lower Davis Street and Limekiln parking areas.
- Complete the Waterline Extension Trail parking area.
- Construct and install kiosks at the Mount Helena and Saddle Drive trailhead parking areas.
- Conduct field reviews of all parking area options for the Arrowroot Drive area with the HOLMAC committee and proceed with public scoping and associated plan amendment as necessitated.

FOREST MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:

D.N.R.C. – Community Forest Western Bark Beetle and Mt. Ascension Fuel Reduction Grants

- Complete 30 acres of slash pile burning, process final reimbursement request and associated project close-out documents.

D.N.R.C. - Mt. Ascension Forest Fuels Reduction Project

- Prepare and complete approximately 35 acres of forest fuel treatment work within Mt. Ascension Natural Park.

D.N.R.C. – Mount Helena Fuels Reduction

- Prepare and complete approximately 60 acres of forest fuel treatment work on the north face of Mount Helena.

U.S.F.S. – Participating Agreement (Capital 360)

- Prepare and complete approximately 60 acres of forest fuel and hazard tree treatment work on U.S.F.S. ownership in Grizzly Gulch.
- Prepare and complete approximately 220 acres of forestry maintenance work within the Open Lands system.

Forest Fuel Treatment Grants

- Complete applications as opportunities arise.

Forestry Visuals

- Remove retention tree and boundary identification flagging from all forestry projects completed to date.
- Respond to trash dumping and abandoned transient camps as needed.

Forestry Education

- Participate in community forestry outreach efforts as opportunities arise.

Firewood Distribution

- Harvest, forward, and process approximately 100 cords of firewood material for clients of the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
- Assist in the organization of volunteers involved in the splitting and distribution of accumulated firewood material during the January 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018 timeframe.

PROPERTY ACQUISITION/EXCHANGE:**Property Acquisition**

- Assist in the completion of property acquisition grant applications as opportunities become available.
- Respond to public and partnership requests regarding potential purchase/sale/exchange of open lands properties.

WEED MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES:**Code Enforcement Officer****Public Education**

- Coordinate groups for weed pulls throughout the summer. (PPLT Weed Social).
- Create a webpage educating public on the city's integrated pest management program and practices.
 - Include control method selection.
 - Information on biocontrol agents.
 - Weed identification stress importance on identifying new invaders early detection and eradication.
 - Grant opportunities available to property owners.
 - General information regarding herbicides and its effects on targeted plants such as some plant may flower but won't produce viable seed.
 - Post proposed annual treatment locations

Noxious Weed Treatment

- Herbicide
 - Treat approximately 200 acres or more based on annual funding amount.
 - Implement a targeted spot treatment program focusing on small infestations along high traffic corridors such as trails or trailheads.
 - Target fuel reduction units and pretreat if possible.

- Prioritize high use access routes.
- Biocontrol:
 - Participate in insects collections for Dalmatian Toadflax, Leafy Spurge, and Spotted Knapweed coordinated by the state bio control coordinator.
 - Assist in monitoring of insect release sites for potential collection.
 - Mark an additional 10-15 past release sites.
 - Update insect release map and include newly marked sites.
- Weed pulls
 - Schedule and participate in weed pulls on open lands.
 - Look to continue the Department of Agriculture Adopt-A-Trailhead program
An example of this includes: The Old Shooting Range area was adopted by the Department of Agriculture in memory of Greg Ames. They guarantee to pull weeds 2 times a year)
- Administer MDA 2017-019 Noxious Weed Trust Fund Grant.

FENCE CONSTRUCTION & REMOVAL:

- Install post and rail fencing on the north and south sides of Arrowroot road near the top of Mt. Ascension to prevent vehicular entrance.
- Identify sections of dysfunctional wire fence occurring upon City of Helena open lands properties and schedule removal.

BOUNDARY IDENTIFICATION:

- Verify open lands boundaries as budgets allow. Prioritize open lands boundary identification needs according to program of work and emerging management issues.
- Install boundary identification posts at approximate 50 foot intervals where encroachment situations are identified.

RECLAMATION:

- Utilize a grass seed mixture containing one or more of the following native grasses: Slender wheatgrass (*Elymus trachycaulus* ssp. *trachycaulus*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis* variety Joeseeph or Nez Perce), Bluebunch wheatgrass (*Agropyron spicatum* or *Pseudoroegenaria spicata* var Goldar)
- Monitor previously seeded areas.